

INSTRUCTION PACKET COVER SHEET

Municipal Court of Columbus

P. O. Box 1340

Columbus, Georgia 31902

(706) 653-4378

PROCEDURE TO FILE A CIVIL SUIT (SMALL CLAIMS)

- Step 1:** All forms are provided by Municipal Court, and must be filled out completely. Each form should have the plaintiff and defendant full name, address, and phone number.
- Step 2:** The suit will then be processed and given a case number normally in 3 to 5 days (GA Law allows 7 days) from the filing date, since we started the marathon papers will be processed faster within 24 hours of the filing date.
- Step 3:** The Marshal's Department then will attempt to serve the suit at the address provided by you, the plaintiff. If the address is wrong or if the defendant has moved, the Marshal's Department will notify you of this information and the suit becomes a Non-Serve Paper. It is important to check and verify all addresses.
- Step 4:** The defendant will have 30 days from the date of service to file an answer or 15 additional days to pay fee to file an answer. You may settle the account by paying it in full. If you choose to file an answer, you will be placed on the next docket to go to court on the matter.
- Step 5:** If there is no response from the defendant after 45 days, you will be issued a default judgment (FiFa). This FiFa then can be used to garnish the person's wages or levy on their property. This is the only way you can collect your money if they don't pay.

FORMS NEEDED:

- 2 SUMMONS
- 2 COMPLAINTS
- 2 COPIES OF CONTRACT OR STATEMENT
(WHY YOU ARE OWED THIS MONEY)